Theme Community Meeting Notes
March 11, 2020 (1:30-3:00 PM ET)

Attendees

FGDC Staff

Name	Agency	Role(s)	✓	Name	Agency	Role(s)	✓
Lorna Schmid	USGS	FGDC OS	✓	James Irvine	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓
Lynda Wayne	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓	Robin Hoban	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓
Susan Harris	USGS	FGDC OS-CS	✓				

Theme Community

Theme	Name	Agency	Role(s)	✓	Addition or Proxy
Address	Lynda Liptrap	Census Bureau	TL	✓ ✓	Matt Zimolzak
Address	Steve Lewis	DOT	TL	✓ ✓	Derald Dudley
Biodiversity and Ecosystems	Marcia McNiff	USGS	TL	✓	
Cadastre	Dominica VanKoten	BLM	TL	✓	
Climate and Weather	Kari Sheets	NOAA	TL		
Cultural Resources	Deidre McCarthy	NPS	TL	✓	
Elevation	Ashley Chappell Hill	NOAA	TL	✓	
Elevation	Susan Buto	USGS	TL	✓	
Geodetic Control	Daniel Roman	NOAA	TL	✓	
Geology	Paul Godfriaux	BOEM	TL	✓	
Geology	Dave Soller	USGS	TL		
Governmental Units	Dierdre Bevington-Attardi	Census Bureau	TL	✓ ✓	Karla Kaywork
Imagery	Greg Snyder	USGS	TL	✓	
Imagery	John Mootz	USDA	TL	✓ ✓	David Davis
Land Use - Land Cover	Greg Reams	USFS	TL		
Land Use - Land Cover	Brad Reed	USGS	TL		
Real Property	Valerie Butler	GSA	TL	✓	
Soils	Drew Kinney	USDA	TL	✓	
Transportation	Derald Dudley	DOT	TL	✓	
Utilities - Offshore	Jeff Harris	BSEE	TL	✓	
Utilities - Terrestrial	TBD				
Water - Inland	Megan Lang	FWS	TL	✓	
Water - Inland	Rebecca Anderson	USGS	TL	✓	
Water - Oceans and Coasts	Patrick Keown	NOAA	TL	✓	

Other Attendees

Tod Dabolt, Gita Urban-Mathieux, Charlene Sylvester, Shirley Hall, Bob Pierce, Ron Salz, Matt Moskwik, Alice (GSA) (No last name stated), Godfred Amponsah, Joel Schlagel, Kenny Elsner, Lora Turner, Matt Stutts, Raquel Wright, Shawn Maddock, Torrin Hultgren

Agenda

- ❖ Welcome and Roll Call
- ❖ Current and Past Theme Reports Status
- ❖ Geospatial Data Act (GDA) Overview
- ❖ Lead Covered Agency (Theme) GDA Reporting
  - ❖ Theme Templates
- ❖ FDS 2020 Action Plan Action 10: *Integrate Geospatial Data Practices into the Federal Data Enterprise*
  - ❖ NGDA Standards Baseline Inventory
- ❖ Metadata Initiatives Update
- ❖ NGDA Inventory & POC Updates
- ❖ Action Item Review
- ❖ 2020 Meeting Schedule
- ❖ Open Discussion

Summary of New Actions

Responsible Party	Description
Theme Community Members – Theme Leads, Dataset Managers, and other interested parties	Review March Theme Community slides and the Draft NGDA Standards document, and **volunteer for one or both Working Groups**: The Lead Covered Agency **Annual Performance Report Working Group** and/or the **NGDA Standards Working Group.** Send an email to NGDATeam@fgdc.gov with your interest.
Theme Community Members	Forward any examples of work being done at the Department or Bureau levels in preparation for Geospatial Data Act or legislative reporting requirements to NGDATeam@fgdc.gov and copy Derald Dudley (Derald.dudley@dot.gov) for awareness.

Current and Past Theme Reports Status – Lorna Schmid

We noted that some of the dates for the Theme Strategic Plans (TSP) have expired or will be running out this year. Just a heads up to look at whether you want to extend the dates that are on them or whether they need to be updated. You can also wait until we move forward with the implementation modifications we might be doing for the Geospatial Data Act (GDA)

reporting.

Same thing for FY19 Theme Implementation Plans (TIP); at this point, you may want to wait or look at them with an eye toward things you've found in the GDA. We're happy to work with anyone who needs access to those source documents if you don't have them. Email the NGDATeam@fgdc.gov for assistance.

Update on Geospatial Data Act Implementation – Lorna Schmid
Presented the GDA update slides that were provided to the National Geospatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Leaders Forum held March 10 to gather non-governmental input on the development of the NSDI Strategic Plan (SP). The FGDC has been working closely with the National Geospatial Advisory Committee (NGAC) on implementation and the NSDI SP. Additionally, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is hoping to get the revised Circular A-16 back to FGDC and agencies soon.

A lot of coordination is going on across different federal activities – Federal Data Strategy (FDS) and it's 2020 Action Plan – and we'll do our best to engage the Themes with those and get your assistance wherever possible.

The GDA Implementation Roadmap and the NSDI Strategic Plan are being worked on with two different teams working on the templates. There is the Lead Covered Agencies report template that I hope to get your help with, and the Covered Agencies report template that Tony LaVoi (NOAA) and Amy Nelson (DOT) are leading, and we're coordinating that work as well. The NSDI Strategic Plan team's goal is to complete the Plan by September 2020 and to provide a framework for agencies to use to complete their plans by December. There are also a lot of Inspector General audits ramping up in agencies now that you should have heard about.

Geospatial Data Act (GDA) Overview with Focus on NGDA Themes – Lorna Schmid
As you know, the GDA was passed in 2018. The GDA formalizes and codifies work that we've already been doing for the National Geospatial Data Assets (NGDA). You can go to FGDC website for updates: https://www.fgdc.gov/gda

There is a specific section in the law that covers the NGDA data themes. I wanted to point out that the definition in the GDA for the term "*National Geospatial Data Asset data theme" means the National Geospatial Data Asset core geospatial datasets (including electronic records and coordinates) relating to a topic or subject designated under Section 756.*"

When it references the "data theme," it's broadly referring to the Themes and the data under

those Themes. There are a lot of cross-references throughout the law and the NGDA Portfolio Team is putting together a flowchart.

There are four specific sections and areas of responsibility in the law under Section 756(b)(3) that talk about requirements (A, B, C, D)[1] for the Themes that we'll talk about:

(A) Provide leadership for developing and implementing geospatial data standards for the theme.
(B) Provide leadership, develop, and implement a plan for nationwide population of the data theme.
(C) Establish goals that support the strategic plan for the NSDI.
(D) Collect and analyze information from geospatial data users regarding user needs and incorporate those needs into strategies for the data theme.

GDA Section 756 (b)(3)(E)(ii)(I) Annual Performance Report – Lorna Schmid
The GDA requires an annual Performance report by the Lead Covered Agencies for each of the Themes. We have a draft process and we'd like to put a team together to work on it. We'd like to build on processes that we already have in place using the Theme Implementation Plans we already have for some of the initial reporting. For Sections (A), (B), (C), (D), we are looking at reporting at a high level, using consistent language across Themes to report ongoing activities that can serve as a baseline. From there, we can figure out how to accomplish future reporting. We also want to make sure that the templates will work for the evaluation and summaries that FGDC will have to put together and that we have the proper training and help to support the reports. At the end of the year, FGDC will create a summary and send it to NGAC for comments. A draft timeline was provided with a goal of developing the template and having it reviewed and finalized first. As we don't have a specific deadline at this moment the timeline is flexible for now.

Section 756 (A) talks about reporting of Standards, and we'll be talking about the baseline inventory of standards that the Federal Data Strategy 2020 Action Plan requires in a minute. So that baseline inventory would serve as the initial reporting for item (A) in the law.

Lynda L: You said Federal Data Strategy, but I think you meant the GDA.
Lorna: Yes, the GDA Section 756 (A) requires reporting of standards, but the Federal Data Strategy 2020 Action Plan also asks for an inventory of standards for the NGDA. So, we'll use that baseline inventory under the FDS Action 10 milestone to feed into the GDA reporting.

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[1] Taken from the Congressional Research Service Geospatial Data Act of 2018 Summary: https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45348

Lynda: So, you're talking about a separate deliverable for that?

Lorna: Yes, we're talking about two separate but related efforts. It will become clear as we move forward. I haven't gotten to the inventory yet. [Clarification after the meeting

Becci: We already do annual reporting, implementation plan reporting, lifecycle assessments, etc. Are you looking at how those reports intersect with the new reporting?

Lorna: Yes, we're folding all that existing reporting into the new reporting requirements. For example, we will supplement the Theme Implementation Plan Template (TIPT) with any new requirements for (A), (B), (C), and (D) that we aren't already doing today.

Diedre: The timeline is clear and helpful. We talked about it at the GDA Tiger Team (TT) meeting, and we'd like a list or spreadsheet timeline so we know specifically which tasks are for Dataset Managers, Theme Leads, or others; who is responsible for what and when.

Lorna: That makes sense, and I hope you can participate on this team. When the TT came together, one of the working groups was for Covered Agencies. The *Lead* Covered Agency (LCA) work needs some additional eyes on it. We do have some contract support for this also. I like the idea of having a spreadsheet of Theme Leads and Dataset Managers need to do and when.

Diedre: That would be super helpful.

[*Note: this should become an action of the LCA Report Development Team.*]

Lorna: We have a management process in place in FGDC, and I submit that the Theme reports could serve as the LCA reports. Where you have DOC and DOI as co-Theme Leads, there would be one Theme report, that could be submitted as one report. They could each submit their own report or add their own information into them. But we have not had a broader conversation on that yet.

Tod: We need to fall back on definitions in the legislation, and that varies depending which legislation it is. But, for the GDA, I don't know if it is at the Department level or sub-organizations, the Bureaus.

Lorna: It says Department. [2]

Diedre: The Department of Interior is telling me that the Park Service said that the LCA is at the Department level.

Tod: When you look at Lorna's timeline, there is the reality of what are the steps that happen between the Theme Lead and before it goes to FGDC, and that hasn't been defined or articulated yet.

Lorna: When we put agencies here, that has been how we've historically done this. We have to factor in the work that will be done behind this timeline. And, agencies like NOAA, USGS, would have to coordinate that through their departments because that's how the GDA is laid out. But

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[2] From the GDA Definitions: a *covered agency* is an executive department, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 101 - https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/5/101 [see the GDA definition for other elements of the covered agency definition.]

we're not changing that NPS or NOAA is the Theme Lead.

Tod: No, we're not changing the leads it's just additional level of review and coordination that needs to occur.

Lorna: The Themes will generate a report. The Departments (LCA) will submit to FGDC, FGDC will review and summarize reports, and the report summary will go to NGAC, and NGAC can comment. The LCA can respond to the FGDC summary and the NGAC comments, if any. The annual report will go online, and the report to Congress will be delivered every two years.

Matt: In terms of complete and submit reports, is 60 days enough time for the Themes, especially for Themes that are co-led?

Lorna: These periods of time on the timeline are not as important as the steps. There will be some flexibility and the team will decide the specifics and sub-steps. We've asked for help in creating the templates since these will be used as the baseline for future reporting.

Matt: That's good, but what I'm concerned about is that after we complete and submit reports, what if there are revisions and comments that need to be incorporated?

Lorna: What you can count on is that FGDC will have input and feedback on the templates as well. I've communicated to Ivan DeLoatch that we need to communicate that out. The Bureaus need to understand that the TL will have these additional workloads and responsibilities to get these reports accomplished.

> Please send an email to NGDATeam@fgdc.gov if you would like to volunteer for the GDA Annual Performance Report Working Group

FDS 2020 Action Plan Action 10: *Integrate Geospatial Data Practices into the Federal Data Enterprise* **– Lorna Schmid**
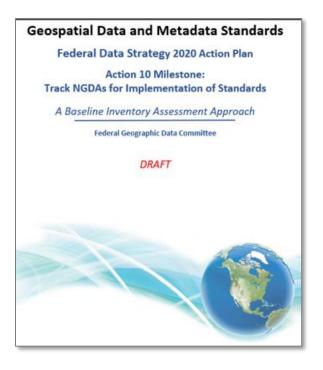
A few months ago, we talked at the Federal Data Strategy (FDS) 2020 Action Plan. The FDS Action Plans are intended to help Agencies, communities of practice and shared service providers have an organized approach to meeting requirements that cross multiple laws, Executive Orders, and directives regarding data and impacting agencies. So, rather than agencies act on their own, this provides a consistent approach.

The slides in this section are linked to the plan (https://strategy.data.gov/action-plan/) and the parts of the plan. The tables on these slides break down which laws or executive orders are being met by the different actions. We will be talking about Action 10: Integrate Geospatial Data Practices into the Federal Data Enterprise, which is also tied to the GDA. Each of these Actions have milestones. The last milestone under Action 10 is to Track NGDA for Implementation of Standards as follows.

Measure percentages of NGDA with:

    i)   metadata standards
    ii)   established content standards
    iii)   standards in process
    iv)   data assets not requiring standards
    v)   no established standards

This is a community of practice action, which is due December 31, 2020. When we talked about the standards under the GDA, this outcome will be used to addresses activities and status for that requirement.

I attached a document to this meeting's invitation that provides a draft approach for a baseline standards inventory. What we've done is document a process that takes the FGDC standards that have been endorsed over many years[3] (some of which have been deprecated or replaced) and categorizes them. In the draft report that we shared, we've gone through and provided definitions for each of the standards categories to promote common understanding, categorized each standard in the FGDC list by theme and type. We've also considered capturing information on other standards in use, including international, for exchange and other categories, along with schemas and classifications that may not be traditionally considered standards.

Geospatial Data and Metadata Standards

Federal Data Strategy 2020 Action Plan

Action 10 Milestone:
Track NGDAs for Implementation of Standards

A Baseline Inventory Assessment Approach

Federal Geographic Data Committee

DRAFT

We would be using the data gathered from the baseline inventory from which an analysis could be done by subject matter experts across the agencies, Themes, FGDC and Subcommittees. We could evaluate whether there are standards that FGDC should endorse in the future, whether they would be removed from the list, etc. In the law, there is a requirement that within 5 years from the date of endorsement of standard, an agency can lose funding if it is not in compliance with the required standard. The question is about when the clock begins on that 5-year period. Tod Dabolt asked the DOI Solicitor about that, and I believe you got some information back?

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[3] https://www.fgdc.gov/standards/list

Tod: The question that was asked was "are the standards that FGDC approved prior to the enactment of the GDA in force already?" The Solicitor reviewed it for DOI and said FGDC needs to ratify the standards previously endorsed and then give the Departments a timeline for coming into compliance. Once the Solicitor's office writes up an official position on that it will be communicated at other levels.

Lorna: And that is awesome news, so what we need to do is generate this baseline inventory and work with subject matter experts to determine which ones need to be endorsed and take it the next step further to determine which ones would be required. For example, if an agency uses a WFS to meet the needs of their customers, it may be an endorsed standard but not required for all NGDA. Additionally, we need to work across Departments to ensure a common understanding and approach.

In order to capture this initial baseline, we want to create a form-based survey with picklists so the Dataset Managers can select which standards apply and textboxes to provide updated information on standards. [Note: those examples are provided in the "Geospatial Data and Metadata Standards" draft report Appendix C provided]. That information would be available and updateable in order to generate dynamic reports.

Matt: What if you have a dataset where parts of the data are in process of meeting different standards? Some of the data may be fulfilling mission requirements but does not meet any standard. In terms of reporting, would we have to get into that detail?

Lorna: I think you need to be on the team so we can figure out how to capture that information. But, off the top, I think you would report use of a mix of standards. There may be many that apply to a dataset.

Matt: Even within content, the dataset may use several standards.

Jim: We are looking at a way to select "all that apply" and we're aware that, particularly for content and attribution, several standards may apply. There may be some that have no standard due to just meeting a mission requirement, or no standard exists. Even if it is an agency policy and not a standard per se, we would also like to capture that.

Lorna: There is a "no standard" option right now. But we'd like volunteers to provide input to this process. [*Added note: Additionally, FGDC OS is interested in supporting development of policy and procedures to document a consistent process for identifying when a standard is not required. This will be beneficial during audits and reporting for the GDA.*]

We really want to get Dataset Managers and other subject matter experts to participate on the team so we're collecting the right information to roll up. And that we're not putting ourselves (the portfolio) in a box later for subsequent reporting. We will take all the prior work that the

Themes have done into consideration.

The volunteer team will review the draft definitions, the draft questions, the picklists, and the training and help documentation.

> Please send an email to NGDATeam@fgdc.gov if you would like to volunteer for the NGDA Standards Baseline Inventory Working Group

The outcomes of the standards inventory will help support the reporting requirements for assessing existing standards that will feed into the annual performance report. There is a section in the law that includes a loss of funds within five years [*see previous comments on this topic*], so we want to make sure we're doing this right. If there are standards that end up being endorsed, which are not being used by all, we need to make sure that there are tools in place we can use to transition to the standard and document that progress toward meeting the GDA. Having a consistent mechanism to gather and update this information on status will help ensure we have consistent language in our reports around issues preventing compliance, like funding, lack of tools, etc.

Presented another draft timeline to outline the steps needed. This shows a mid-November due date, but final information is due to GSA by December 31, so there is flexibility here. Again, the most important thing at this point is identifying the steps and filling in the due dates as we identify them.

We will evaluate what the best option is for the survey tool so it's the best long-term option.

David: For Imagery, there are 6 or 8 listed, but only one or two are used. Is this for those that are applicable?
Lorna: Yes, the list goes back years and so some may no longer be applicable, and some may need to be removed from the list.
Lynda: You mentioned a discussion about whether FGDC will be involved in endorsing standards, and some standards may be in use that are not endorsed. Timing wise, there would need to be a decision about FGDC endorsing or dropping a standard.
Lorna: The law says, in accordance with Section 216 of the E-Gov Act of 2002, the Committee (meaning all of FGDC) shall establish standards for each NGDA data themes. I found a couple of E-Government annual implementation plans submitted to Congress that pointed to standards that had been endorsed for that year. But, as Tod said, the DOI Solicitor has reviewed it, and we need the other Solicitors to come together and determine when the five-year clock starts.

Lynda: So how we're planning to interpret that guidance for the five-year period and how the government will modify the list of endorsed standards is still unclear right now.

Lorna: Yes, that's right. I proposed to the FGDC Office of the Secretariat (OS) and FGDC supports the effort for us to take on the baseline inventory from which that assessment will happen.

Lynda: This is a really good start. It is very helpful to have this document. I give you all a lot of credit in pulling together this document together for us to refer to.

Lorna: Thank you. This document will be a strawman, so we need input. This work will impact a lot of people's work lives for a long time. We will be looking at a collaborative environment for this work. We will be scheduling a couple of meetings to kick off the two teams. If you can volunteer for both teams, we'll try to give you as little work as possible but allow you to give as much feedback as you can.

The two Working Groups that we need volunteers for are: 1) Lead Covered Agency Annual Performance Reports and 2) NGDA Standards. If people have done any work already for this reporting, please send it to the NGDATeam@fgdc.gov and copy Derald Dudley (Derald.Dudley@DOT.gov). [*Note: Derald is on the GDA Communication Working Group*]

Metadata Initiatives Update – Lorna Schmid

Metadata Guidelines
A reminder that the FGDC Technical Guidance has been published (https://fgdc.gov/technical-guidance).

Metadata Workflow Testing across data.gov and the GeoPlatform
We've also done a lot of work on gathering and validating a representative sampling for all types of metadata being delivered by agencies (we'll test both source and valid versions and share the results), created a test WAF, the Image Matters team (now transitioning off contract and the new Xentity team is coming on board), had developed a CSDGM to ISO 19139 transform. To date data.gov has been transforming those records using a   lossy transform. Those have now been fixed and we'll be testing those. We modified the titles of the metadata records so they will be easy to find (e.g. "Test Copy Do Not Use"). We will harvest those into data.gov and into geoplatform.gov and see what changes occur.

NGDA Inventory & POC Updates
Changes to Portfolio Dataset Manager points of contact were made for Soils and Biodiversity and Ecosystems Themes for several NGDA.

Action Item Review

The previous Action Item list has been cleared out for now, and the only action is to **Please Volunteer ~ Get Involved ~ Stay Informed (with more to come).**

Next Meeting

The regular meeting schedule resumes next month on **Tuesday, April 7th from 1:00-2:30pm ET**. A meeting announcement will be sent ahead. If anyone new needs to be added to the distribution, please email NGDATeam@fgd.gov. Thank you!